

building material and as it reached the wall it turned and exuded a drop of mucilaginous fluid from the abdomen then whirled instantly about and deposited its fibers upon it as it lay on the wall, mixing and moulding the mass with its jaws. This pulp had about the consistency of papier mache and was readily manipulated forming a wall of about the thickness of heavy writing paper. This hardens rapidly, but remains pliable for some time, thus the walls on the extreme outer edge of the newly erected portion could be bent without breaking, whereas the older portions are quite brittle.

As the orifice on which the ants were employed grew smaller, fewer and fewer could find room, yet there was no crowding, each keeping his accustomed distance from his fellows, so one after another they disappeared, as I watched, until but one was left to complete the minute hole remaining.

These ants are very destructive to buildings, especially to the small houses of the negroes, and when they have once obtained a foothold the house is doomed. I knew of a small house in the neighborhood of Nassau that had not been occupied for a year or two that was

two-thirds devoured by them. There was a nest on the roof, supported by the rafters, around which all the shingles had disappeared, while others were much eaten and all the posts were thickly perforated with their galleries. Such was the speed with which the ants worked, through industry and numbers, that the eroded surfaces appeared quite fresh, being of nearly the color of newly cut wood. The owner of this house informed me that he had destroyed every trace of the nest many times only to see it rebuilt, as fast as the ants could construct it.

[NOTE. Unfortunately Mr. Maynard did not preserve specimens of this termite for identification and Dr. Hagen in his *Monographie der Termiten* does not mention any species from the Bahamas. In 1883 Mr. B. H. Van Vleck collected large numbers of *Eutermes ripperti* at Nassau, and Mr. Maynard's observations undoubtedly refer to this species, which is common upon many of the West Indian islands and in South America. See, *Proc. Bost. Soc. Nat. Hist.*, December 1877 v. 19, p. 267-274 for Notes on the tree nests of Termites in Jamaica by H. G. Hubbard.—S: H.]

## WALCKENAER'S NAMES OF AMERICAN SPIDERS.

BY JAMES HENRY EMERTON, BOSTON, MASS.

Mr. Henry C. McCook has called attention in the Proceedings of the Philadelphia Acad. of Nat. Sciences to the names of American spiders published by Walckenaer, and the necessity of

using them in place of latter names given by Hentz and others.

There is no doubt that as far as these names can be identified with certainty and shown to be the oldest, they ought

to be used for the species to which they belong but the difficulty is, as Mr. McCook shows in this article, in their identification.

Walckenaer, as is well known, never saw the American spiders that he named. He bought a large number of drawings of spiders made in Georgia by John Abbot and published descriptions of the drawings, so that the first step in identifying Walckenaer names is to identify the drawings by Abbot.

The only known drawings of spiders by Abbot are in the library of the British Museum where they have been for a long time and have been shown to any person interested in them. These are probably the same drawings used by Walckenaer as Mr. McCook has compared the numbers and notes upon them with those referred to in Walckenaer's descriptions of similar spiders and found them to be the same.

Mr. McCook is inclined, however, to set too high a value on these drawings, for although his engagements prevented "him giving more than an hour or two to the study of the figures," and as far as mentioned, no American spiders were compared directly with them, he undertook to identify, off hand, a considerable number of them, a partial list of which he gives in this article with the revised names by which, as he says, "they must hereafter be known if Walckenaer's names are to be accepted."

In 1875 I looked over these same drawings at the British Museum and like Mr. McCook made hasty identifications of such few of them as I could. In my notes made at the time I find the following list.

- 4. *Epeira placida* Hentz.
- 54. *Linyphia communis* Hentz.
- 55. Young *Linyphia marmorata* Hentz.

- 65. *Mubiona gracilis* Hentz.
- 77.78. *Uloborus*.
- 79.80. *Epeira caudata* Hentz.
- 117. *Epeira thaddens* Hentz.
- 116. *Epeira insularis* Hentz.
- 121. *Epeira insularis*.
- 122. *Theridion sphaerula* Hentz.
- 556. *Epeira insularis*.

A comparison of the numbers shows that only five of these identifications agree with those of McCook showing the uncertainty of off hand identifications of these drawings by two persons both familiar with the common spiders of the northern states.

The greater number of Abbot's drawings represent the spiders only in the most general and indefinite way and it seems to me improbable that any large number of them can ever be identified. At any rate this cannot be done until the spiders of the southern states have become better known. An attempt now to apply as many as possible of Walckenaer's names to any spiders that his descriptions or Abbot's drawings may possibly belong to, will only increase the number of uncertain names in use and so add to the labor of every future student of the subject. After the common spiders all over the United States have been described and are known to several students it will be possible to compare them with the descriptions of Walckenaer, Koch and Hentz with some prospect of finding out what these old descriptions are really worth and how many of them can be referred with certainty to particular species of spiders. With the present small number of students of American spiders it seems to me safer for each to use such names as appear to him the most certain even if not the oldest and leave the law of propriety and the "credit of entitulation" to take care of themselves.